1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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Emirs were, in a loose sense, vassals of a larger state, the Fulani Empire of Gwandu. Beyond an annual tribute by Bida to Gwandu (reduced to-day to a nominal gift) and the merely symbolic confirmation by the Emir of Gwandu of every newly appointed king of Nupe, expressed in the traditional bestowal of a flag, the vassalship involved little interference with the internal government of Nupe. The Emir of Gwandu acted mainly as the guarantor of the various political systems under his suzerainty. In this capacity he was sometimes appealed to in boundary disputes and suchlike, and he would support his arbitration if need be by military action, as happened in the dispute over rights to raid between Bida and Agaie (see p. 115). In turn Bida, like all other Fulani vassal states, could be called upon to send military help to her suzerain. The overlordship of Gwandu was also appealed to in the early dynastic disputes between the descendants of Mallam Dendo. It was due to the advice of Gwandu that Usman Zaki ceded the throne to Masaba; Gwandu helped the Fulani against their rebellious general Umar Bahaushe; and Gwandu supported later the reinstatement of Usman Zaki. The influence of Gwandu upon dynastic affairs disappeared, characteristically, with the gradual establishment of a fixed system of succession which could itself safeguard balance of power and the conciliation of rival claims.

The rival character of the threefold dynastic structure is abundantly manifest in present-day Nupe. Every possession or privilege linked with Nupe kingship reflects the tripartite arrangement. The three highest ranks in the hierarchy of the kingdom are vested in the three royal 'clans': the ruling king, head of one royal house, takes the title *Etsu*; the head of the royal house next in succession, the title *Shaba*, 'Heir Presumptive'; and the head of the third house, the title *Kpotũ*. The land of the Beni round Bida where the Fulani settled after their decisive victory, appropriating all vacant land, is divided into three parts: the family of Usman Zaki owns the country east of Bida, the family of Umaru Majigi the country in the south, and the family of Masaba the country in the west.[1] Bida town is divided, as we have seen, into three *ekpã*, each with its royal palace, and each bearing the name of one of the three royal families. Every king adding more land and power to his kingdom is adding at the same time more land and power to his own family, and distributes land and wealth among his own followers and favourites. Every *Etsu* Nupe uses the period of his reign to increase to the utmost the wealth and power of his house. The only balance of power lies in the rigid system of succession. For favouritism and extortions from the ruling *Etsu* may win for the house of his successor the favour of the masses; oppression from one may mean help from the other; the increase of power in one royal house will eventually be balanced by the growth of the house that succeeds it to the throne. It is a precarious balance, and its history, which is the history of Bida to-day, is written in rivalries, feuds, intrigues, and revolts, which threaten constantly the peace of the country and tear the people of Bida into rival factions.

The struggle for dynastic power is as apparent in the economic field.

[1] See sketch map, p. 81.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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services which they have rendered to their overlords. Ultimately all land is derived from one source: the royal house, which again bestows land for services rendered. The title of the royal house to the possession of land is by the right of conquest. We must examine this more closely.

In the conquest of Nupe country the members of the royal family appropriated three categories of tribal land: all no-man's-land between villages, i.e. virgin land in the *cikã*, the uninhabited bush; also all village land which, once occupied, had been lying fallow for long, either because of the death of the owner or his emigration, or because a short-term lease (borrowing) had lapsed; finally, under certain conditions, the *Etsu* also seized the village land on the outskirts of the village territory, what we have called the 'land reserve' of the village. The first two kinds of land were divided up geographically between the three royal houses, as we have already seen, one receiving all land to the east of Bida, one all land to the west and north-west, and the third all land to the south of Bida. (See sketch-map, p. 81.) The last category of expropriated land (the village 'reserve') was sometimes appropriated by a ruling *Etsu* arbitrarily and irrespective of its geographical position in one of the three royal territories.[1] Of the land thus owned by the royal houses by the right of conquest the *Etsu* or royal princes of highest rank bestowed smaller or larger parcels on their followers, members of the nobility or slaves and *bara* 'for services rendered'; the land grant gave them complete and permanent rights to the land, in return for which they had to pay the usual annual *dzankâ* in kind. The royal tenants—'primary tenants' as we have called them—then settled their own men in various ways on this land, either founding *tunga* settlements for them or subletting the land (or part of it) in any of the ways discussed above. Every landed property which we find in the 'conquered territory', excepting only the scattered islands of original village land, has thus been derived directly or indirectly, that is, through the hierarchy of feudal nobility, from one of the three royal houses of Nupe.

Apart from these possessions which were given away to rank-holders and henchmen the royal families have kept certain royal estates proper. This land is not transmitted in the ordinary way of inheritance to younger brothers or sons, nor is it alienable like the other lands appropriated by the royal houses, but can be claimed only by the three titled heads of the royal dynasties. Right to this special royal land is thus part of the promotion to rank and status within the dynasty and the political system at large. It implies absolute and permanent ownership; it implies more than merely the 'administrative' control over family land that is vested in the family head in the Nupe village. Yet it reflects the most essential element in Nupe peasant ownership of land—what I have called 'access' to the land in virtue of headship of the kinship group. This surprising analogy between feudal monarchy and peasant ownership is rooted in an analogy in the structure of the two groups as such, village

[1] Thus, for example, all the land in the district of Jima, south of Bida, belongs to the house of Umaru Majigi. But the village land of Kucigi, a village in this district, had been appropriated by *Etsu* Maliki (of the house of Usman Zaki) when he was *Etsu* Nupe and bestowed on one of his slaves, the *Cece*.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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233 178 northern, humped, breed. They were humpless and of small build, evidently related to the dwarf cattle which exist to-day in certain areas in eastern and south-eastern Nigeria. These dwarf cattle are said to have been very widespread in eastern and northern Nupe country before the Fulani conquest; the Gbari, for example, maintain that they had owned, originally, large herds of these cattle which, to-day, have almost disappeared in this region. The traditions of Nupe speak of a magic connected with a bull or a cow with which the ancestor-king Tsoede endowed the first Beni chiefs. The *ketsá* ritual on the Niger river demanded the sacrifice of a bull, to be presented annually by the chief of the Kyedye. Evidently, these rites and sacrifices could only have referred to these dwarf, pre-Fulani cattle. Anyhow, there is no evidence that cattle have ever played any important part in the economy of the peasant areas, and possibly in the whole pre-Fulani kingdom.

233 ● 471 177 The disappearance of cattle, however, from the Fulani-Nupe, and from the households of the rich, demands explanation. No doubt the 'great trouble' has played some part in this change. With the disappearance of slavery the problem of finding suitable and sufficiently cheap labour presented an additional difficulty. But the decision to abandon cattle-keeping was also due to a decided change in the attitude of the people towards this commodity. The herds of cattle were, in a word, capital. The Nupe do not live on the cattle, basing their diet on milk and butter, as the Fulani and other cattle people do. Nor are the cattle in Nupe linked to a whole system of religious beliefs, taboos, and ceremonial usages. The *Etsu* of Agaie (on whose herd I could examine these questions in detail) occasionally sold one or two head of cattle when he was in need of money—this was the only concrete use to which he or any of the Nupe cattle-owners would put their cattle. I cannot judge how far status and prestige may have formerly entered into this assessment of the value of cattle. I gathered that it could not have been of much significance; the possession of horses counted for much more. But the existing incentives to possess cattle must have been further weakened, and even reversed, by two changes in the present-day economic situation. First, by the enormous rise in the price of cattle, especially in the countries south of Nupe, which came with the increased (European and Europeanized) demand for meat and skins. Second, by the appearance of new means of economic enterprise, and the prospects of more profitable, large-scale trade, which necessitated a more liquid form of capital. It is a fact that a large number of rich cattle-owners soon sold their herds, attracted by the high price, and also realizing most probably the greater advantage that, under modern conditions, lay in transforming their stock into ready money.

231 This tendency to keep the capital 'liquid' is shown also in the readiness of the Nupe to experiment with different kinds of live stock. Thus we find here and there—and the same thing is reported from Nupe a hundred years ago—ostriches, which the Nupe buy from traders from the north, feed and tend and finally sell again with a profit. An enterprising chief had even taken to breeding horses; it was done on a very small scale, and was in Nupe an isolated case, but still characteristic of

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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There is little to be said about fowls. In every house chickens are kept; men and women, grown-ups and children, have their own chicken. Often one sees a young boy going to the market to sell 'his' chicken, given him by father or mother. The fowls are bought and sold regularly in the food-markets of every larger village. Fowls represent the most important sacrificial food of pagan (and to some extent Mohammedan) Nupe; almost every religious ceremony, communal as well as household-rites, involves the killing of a fowl. Chickens are, besides, the most desirable food the Nupe know. Eggs are not marketed and in certain parts of Nupe not eaten. The Beni do not eat eggs because 'they make men sterile and women barren'. The Nupe also keep pigeons, for which they put up a bowl of water on a forked pole inside the house. Pigeons are not as a rule traded in the market, nor are they eaten regularly, but sometimes the eating of pigeons is ordered by diviners for ritual reasons.

Donkeys and Horses

About three-quarters of the donkeys which are found in Nupe belong to Bida town. They are transport animals owned mostly by traders, pack animals used in their caravans which carry palm-oil and salt from the river steamers up country, and bring natron down from Hausa and Bornu. In 1935 the only districts possessing no donkeys were those which have other means of transport: the riverain area, and the district of Mokwa through which the railway runs. Again, the largest number of horses is found in Bida. Horses, as I have said already, are a symbol of rank and status. The *Etsu* Nupe may, as a sign of his highest esteem, present a man with a horse. But every man who can afford it will buy one for himself or for his sons. A horse represents, if not the most profitable, the most noble expenditure or investment.

Yet, profitable in the narrow sense, or in the wider sense as implying enhancement of prestige—all these possibilities of investment of capital in live stock are determined by the amount of liquid capital available; in other words, by the volume of money in circulation. The economic stringency of the country which, starting from the decline in the market prices for native produce in 1934–5, as well as the subsequent recovery in 1936, is reflected clearly in the figures of the census of live stock for Bida Division for the last four years.

	Sheep	*Goats*	*Horses*	*Donkeys*
1933 . .	5,788	28,856	1,196	111
1934 . .	6,600	29,445	1,160	137
1935 . .	5,010	25,876	917	137
1936 . .	5,702	34,751	1,007	149

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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minutes to produce a medium-sized bangle; I estimated the total daily output of a single workshop at from fifty to sixty bangles.

The finished articles, the coloured and ornamented bangles and beads, are left to cool in a heap of ashes inside the hut to be collected later in large baskets and to be put aside for the traders who call regularly at the *masagá* quarter. The glass-workers have a small but busy market of their own in the centre of their quarter. To this market the traders in bottle-glass bring their goods, women from neighbouring hamlets and farms the daily supply of firewood, and other women traders grain and various food-stuffs for the households of the glass-workers. The traders in the finished article, however, buy the bangles and beads directly from the producers, i.e. the individual workshop. These traders are both men and women and, among the women, both wives of the glass-workers and women from outside. The *masagá* themselves never trade their glass-ware. Bida glass is bought and sold all over Nigeria—it is to be seen in every larger market of the country, in Lagos in the south, and in Kano in the north. There is a steady demand for it, and the *masagá* work regularly six days a week (resting only on Friday), all through the year, always certain of disposing easily of their output. They have neither time nor inclination for additional agricultural work, not even in the restricted form of farming 'for the mouth' which is common among all other Nupe craftsmen.

The people who work together in the same workshop are, as in the case of blacksmiths and brass-smiths, mostly close relations. But among the glass-workers the group which shares a common workshop also forms a single labour- or *efakó*-unit, working under a common head who organizes the group work, disposes of its output, and, in *efakó* manner, controls the income produced by the group. Even distant relations or strangers who have joined a workshop fall under the *efakó* rules. The labour organization of the *masagá*, then, does not allow for an individual *bucá* income in addition to the group income. Instead we find a new arrangement in the form of small regular 'wages' (at the rate of 2*d*. a day) which the *efakó* head pays his adult co-workers out of the income produced by the group. He keeps the rest and, with it, defrays the costs of production, i.e. the costs of fuel and raw glass or the occasional purchase of new tools from the blacksmiths, as well as the various family expenses entailed in his position as *efakó* head. This financial arrangement is clearly necessitated by the special conditions of labour: it would indeed be extremely difficult to calculate the share of the individual worker in this strongly co-operative form of production. The intensive co-operation itself is explained by the nature of this 'mass production' and by the demands of efficiency and economy: the use of a common furnace and a common store of fuel and raw material, the specialized tasks of the individual workshops and, in the single workshop, the elaborate division of labour, are all calculated to ensure a high degree of efficiency and economy. We note that the means of production are partly produced by joint labour (e.g. the building of the furnace), and partly purchased by the leader of the labour-unit out of his share in the group income (e.g. the iron tools, the fuel); and we note further that this method of production,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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which, in the interest of efficiency, has evolved centralized control of labour and means of production on a comparatively large scale, comes closer than any other Nupe craft to the principle of the modern factory system.

We have already seen that in the group at large, i.e. in the glass-workers' guild, a similar intensive co-operation obtains. Its organization falls to the guild-head, who assigns the different tasks to the various workshops and is responsible for the general planning of production. This planning must take into account the varying conditions of the market, and we find, in fact, that the guild-head, without interfering with the commercial transactions of the individual workshop, regularly consults traders and middlemen who visit the *masagá* quarter, and maps out accordingly the scheme of work for his community. On my many visits to the *masagá* I found that the guild-head could always tell me what kind of work was carried out in the various workshops, or when a particular workshop would start on a new task. The guild-head, who styles himself *Masagá*, has his own workshop, where his sons and brothers are working. He does not often work there himself, but certain difficult tasks, such as the making of very big, heavy bangles, which fetch the highest price, he alone can perform. The guild-head assists his co-workers with advice and practical help, also with small loans of money for the purchase of raw material or fuel; he arbitrates in internal quarrels, and he is, like all Nupe guild-heads, the accredited representative of his guild at the Nupe court.

The ever-expanding business of the Bida glass industry involves an almost permanent need of new labour. Formerly the glass-workers bought slaves and trained them in the craft in order to enlarge their machinery of production. To-day they are regularly accepting apprentices. In 1936 five young men were being trained as glass-workers. An apprentice applies to the guild-head, who will then place him in charge of a certain workshop. The training is calculated to take three years, during which time the apprentices continue to live in their own homes and come to the *masagá* quarter only to work. But when their apprenticeship is completed they not only move into the *masagá* quarter, but are expected to marry *masagá* women (as did also the slaves in former days). This adoption into the kinship group is considered essential and is as much a qualification for the practice of the craft as is the technical training itself. Thus the monopoly of the glass-workers is kept intact, and no new branches can be established outside their organization. Kinship interests and kinship co-operation are enlisted in the service of professional co-operation and solidarity and in maintaining the continuity of a highly specialized, monopolized and almost secret, technique of production. Economic interests, in turn, are seen to be sufficiently powerful to effect a radical adjustment in the kinship structure, and to create, in a patrilineal society, a matrilineal enclave.

WEAVERS

The weavers, called *edeluciži*, present another instance of the tripartite organization of Bida crafts. Each of the three *ekpā* of the town harbours one of the three guild sections of the weavers. However,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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after a slight recovery, for 1*s*. 3*d*. Straw hats ten years ago fetched 2*s*. 6*d*. and 5*s*.; in 1934 8*d*. and 1*s*.; in 1936 5½*d*. and 1*s*. 3*d*.; embroidered gowns sold ten years ago for £5 to £6; in 1934 they could be bought for 30*s*. or £2. But in the attempt to lower prices Nupe guild industries cannot go beyond cutting down profits; they cannot reduce the costs of production—or else they must weaken maintenance of labour and destroy the labour organization itself. One method of reducing what we might call in a broad sense costs of production was to discontinue the payments to family heads and guild-masters, as in the case of blacksmiths and weavers; another, to reorganize production on the basis of individual paid labour, as in the case of the bead-workers. Another, to save on the upkeep of the means of production: this was the case in native iron-mining. Native iron-mining is, in fact, the most convincing instance of the limits set to the reduction in costs of production. Native iron-ore mining was, as we have seen, not destroyed by the competition of a more satisfactory raw material; nor would the price of the native product alone have been responsible for its disappearance from the market. What was responsible was the relation between a low price and a 'high cost of production' which could not be reduced. In this primary industry in the strict sense of the word costs of production equal crude labour costs, i.e. time and human energy. When low prices made it impossible for the iron-ore miners to make enough money even to ensure sufficient food supplies, cost of production had to be reduced, i.e. time and energy taken away from craft-work and devoted to agriculture. We could study the effects of these elementary attempts at reducing 'labour costs', which were forced upon the craftsmen; only one way was open to them, and that was to work their furnaces wastefully, irrespective of gradual deterioration, even to the degree of allowing them to fall into complete disrepair.

Yet it would not be true to say that the economic system of Nupe has never evolved more satisfactory methods to meet these contingencies which every economy must reckon with. I have said that formerly the Nupe craftsmen employed slave-labour on a considerable scale. Now, slave-labour provided an important mechanism to safeguard the flexibility of the economic system with regard to labour costs and profits. Slave-labour represents an investment of capital almost in the modern sense; for by investing capital in slaves one invested surplus capital in a profit-bearing concern, and the surplus made in times of prosperity could thus be made to serve as means of reducing labour-costs in times of stringency. The craftsman who bought slaves could not only use them as cheaper labour in his workshop, but could also put them to agricultural labour, to produce food for himself and his family—food which otherwise would have to be bought out of the profits made in the craft. The Nupe industries have lost the primitive form of industrial capital, slave-labour, without having yet evolved the modern substitute, machinery. They must thus fall short of the most vital necessity in industrial productive organization, its adaptability to changing demands. These conclusions must not be ignored when planning the preservation or revival of African crafts and craft-guilds.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

larly bitter in Bida. In the area west of the Kaduna River, there was less appropriation and there is less pressure on land. Land tenure is on a traditional tribal or village basis; there is no severe competition for possession and land disputes are rare.

Traditionally men only could hold land; acquisition by women is still comparatively rare and occurs only around Bida. Rights may be acquired in various ways:

(1) By a member of a non-land-owning family exercising his right as a member of the village community; land thus acquired is inalienable.

(2) By short-term lease from an individual land-holder for two to five years; this method is known as *aro* (" borrowing "); land thus acquired is also inalienable.

(3) By a member of a land-owning family exercising his claim, on his marriage, to part of the land held by the family.

(4) By a stranger adopted into the household, in the same manner as (3).

(5) By lease for an indefinite period, against payment plus rent in kind; this has now become tantamount to purchase.

(6) By hereditary tenantship; no rent is paid but a share in the produce is given.

(7) By " primary " tenantship; rights are ceded to another in recognition of services rendered, but the tenant must provide a share of the produce. If the primary tenant is not himself a farmer, as is often the case among members of the Nupe nobility, he will sub-let the land for a high initial fee and rent in kind.

Village land is held and apportioned by the chief. It is of three types:

(1) Land in the hands of families or individuals, whether worked or fallow (*lati*).

(2) Vacant land which has reverted to the chief for future allotment (*gonta*).

(3) The fringe of " reserve " land or bush, the boundaries of which are unmarked (*cika*).

Village land rarely stretches more than three miles from the village. Small individual plots (*bucá*) are mainly near the village; larger family plots of 12–16 acres (*efakó*) are generally farther afield. Family plots do not all lie near together. Land is not fenced except on the marshland plots near Kacha.

No fruit trees on village land may be cut down without the permission of the head, who has a special right to all fruit-bearing trees. Shea-nut trees on vacant land are common property, and women collect the fruit and share it. Shea-nut trees on occupied farmland belong to the owner of the farm. Farm plots in the village itself are owned by the people living in the compound adjoining the plot; they are apportioned and inherited within the houses and never left uncultivated.[30]

Tenure of fishing pools is important among riverain groups. Among the Batači every pool has a name and a specific owner. A pool may be owned by the village collectively or by an individual or it may be attached to a title and change ownership with it. Pools owned by individuals can be inherited. Rents are fixed by custom and do not vary from year to year; yearly fishing rights may be bought by individuals.[31] Strangers in Kede district seek formal permission to fish from the *Kuta*, through the village head in whose area they settle. The period of settlement varies from a few months to about three years, but there is no permanent settlement. Presents of fish may be made to the village head and the *Kuta*, or strangers' tax paid to the Bida Treasury.[32]

[30] Nadel, 1942, pp. 180–204; Temple, 1919, p. 331.

[31] Prices given in the appendix to the Notes on Kede District (1950) vary between 2s. 6d. and £2.

[32] Notes on Kede District, 1950.